ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method and system for video distribution among a plurality of users uses a host computing device that allocates tasks among a number of audiovisual serving devices. The system architecture permits a single host to handle a plurality of simultaneous users and permits the system to be easily scaled up or down in overall size and capacity. A user is able to select between traditional video program material, such as scheduled special events and on-demand feature length films, as well as Internet access, video games and computer applications. Assignable Computing Devices (ACDs), one type of audiovisual serving device within the system, are used for a number of functions including providing Internet access to a user, controlling the menu-driven process of selecting program material and providing computer applications to users. Other types of audiovisual serving devices, which are more specialized than the ACDs, provide program material such as scheduled special events, on-demand feature length films and video games. The user communicates with the ACDs through an intuitive graphical user interface (GUI) while selecting program material to view through a series of menus. These menus are easy to update and tailor to the preferences of an individual user. Internet access is provided by assigning an ACD to the user. Computer inputs are provided by in-room devices connected to the terminus of the video distribution system. Computer outputs are converted to audiovisual signals

suitable for display by an in-room monitor such as a television set. In this way a user need not have an in-room computer to obtain internet access and a number of ACDs can provide for the computer needs of a larger number of user's through this dynamic assignment scheme.

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